



# Williamsburg, VA **POLICE**

## Understanding our Use of Force Policy

**#NotOnMyWatch**



# A Message from Chief Dunn

“

*Our agency is completely committed to Community Policing and 21st Century Policing. We strive to be transparent and encourage community involvement to ensure we perform at the highest level possible. We incorporate the absolute best practices into our policies and continuously look for ways to remain in the forefront of effective, procedurally just, and compassionate policing. Our unwavering commitment to persuasion and communication skills, which help us to minimize the level of force necessary to keep the public and officers safe, is one example of our reform minded approach to policing our wonderful community.*

”

## General Applications Concerning the Use of Force

Officers shall use only the force that is objectively reasonable to bring an incident under control, while protecting the safety of the officer and others. Officers shall use force only when no reasonably effective alternative appears to exist and shall use only the level of force, which a reasonably prudent officer would use under the same or similar circumstances.

The decision to use force requires careful attention to the facts and circumstances of each particular case, including the severity of the crime at issue, whether the suspect poses an immediate threat to the safety of the officer or others, and whether they are actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight.

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Williamsburg Police  
Department



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Since 1987, the Williamsburg Police Department has been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), the gold standard in public safety. The law enforcement accreditation process focuses on standards that provide best practices related to life, health, and safety procedures for the agency. Accreditation is a voluntary program, compliance is reviewed yearly, and reaccreditation occurs every four years. Only approximately 5% of US law enforcement agencies meet the standards for a CALEA accreditation.



## Chokeholds

The City of Williamsburg explicitly bans chokeholds and carotid control holds.

## Training

Annually, each officer receives in-service training on the agency's use-of-force policy and demonstrates proficiency with all approved lethal and electronic control weapons that are authorized for use. In-service training for other less lethal weapons and weaponless control techniques occurs at least biennially.

## De-escalation

Officers receive training in the use of de-escalation and crisis intervention. Officers are trained to take action or communicate, verbally or non-verbally, in an attempt to stabilize the situation and reduce the immediacy of the threat. These approaches allow for more time, options, and resources to be called upon to resolve the situation without the use of force or with a reduction in the force necessary. De-escalation may include the use of such techniques as command presence, advisements, warnings, verbal persuasion, and tactical repositioning.

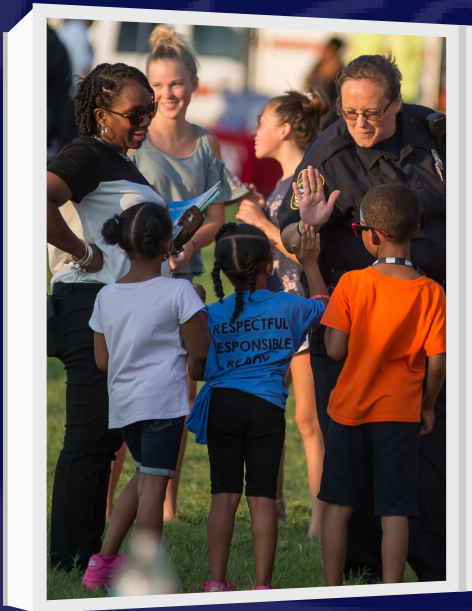


## Duty to Intervene

Any officer, regardless of rank, present and observing another officer using force that is clearly other than objectively reasonable given the situation shall safely intercede to end and prevent further excessive force. Officers will immediately report these observations to a supervisor.

## Reporting

Officers will make immediate verbal notification to their supervisor and complete a detailed written report whenever force is used in the performance of an official police duty, or when exercising their law enforcement authority. All Use of Force Reports will be reviewed by the Watch Commander, the appropriate Bureau Supervisor and the Chief of Police.



## Medical Aid

Medical assistance shall be provided as soon as it is practical for persons who have sustained injury, expressed any complaint of injury, been rendered unconscious, or that the officer has reason to believe has been injured as the result of any use of force incident or any injuries during apprehension. In the event that a suspect is injured, officers have a duty and obligation to provide medical treatment while the suspect is in custody. Any injured person shall be treated with dignity and respect and shall be properly cared for while awaiting the arrival of emergency services personnel.

## Shooting at Moving Vehicles

The City of Williamsburg bans shooting at moving vehicles except when the vehicle is a direct threat to the officer or someone else and there is no possible path to get out of the way.

# Crisis Intervention Training

Our officers receive crisis intervention training and are part of the Colonial Area Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). Law enforcement officers often serve as first responders to most crises. A CIT program is an innovative, community-based approach to improve the outcomes of these encounters. CIT improves communication, identifies mental health resources for those in crisis and ensures officer and community safety.



## Body Worn Cameras

The Body Worn Camera (BWC) is an audio and video recording system worn by officers and serves as an additional means of documenting incidents encountered by the officer in the course of their public safety duties. Every officer in our department is issued a body worn camera and is required to use it to document the officer's point of view.

## Medical Training

Police officers undergo first responder medical training, and patrol vehicles are stocked with lifesaving medical equipment including wound dressings, tourniquets, defibrillators, naloxone (opiod reversing drug), and other emergency medical supplies. This allows officers to provide critical care in the event of an injury.